

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1. A method for providing a content tracking system  
comprising:

generating a tracking identifier;

incorporating the tracking identifier with content stored in a

10 storage medium;

storing the tracking identifier in a database;

providing the storage medium to a primary distributor;

receiving information from the primary distributor;

associating within the database, in response to the receiving

15 information from the primary distributor, the tracking identifier with the  
information from the primary distributor;

receiving information from a second level distributor;

associating within the database, in response to the receiving

information from the second level distributor, the tracking identifier with the

20 second level distributor; and

providing credit to the primary distributor and the second level  
distributor in response to a transaction derived from the content on the  
storage medium.

25 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the transaction derived from  
the content is selected from the group consisting of a sale, a lease, and a  
license.

30 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the incorporating step  
comprises incorporating the tracking identifier into a burst cut area of the

storage medium.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

receiving information from a third level distributor;

5 associating within the database, in response to the receiving information from the third level distributor, the tracking identifier with the third level distributor, the second level distributor and the primary distributor; and

10 providing credit to the primary distributor, the second level distributor and the third level distributor in response to the transaction derived from the content on the storage medium.

5. A method of tracking content comprising:

15 receiving a tracking identifier that identifies a particular copy of content on a storage medium;

placing the tracking identifier in a database;

receiving information from a primary distributor;

20 associating within the database, in response to the receiving information from the primary distributor, the tracking identifier with the information from the primary distributor;

receiving information from a second level distributor; and

25 associating within the database, in response to the receiving information from the second level distributor, the tracking identifier with the second level distributor.

6. The method of claim 5 further comprising:

30 crediting the primary distributor and the second level distributor in response to a transaction derived from the particular copy of content on the storage medium.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the transaction derived from the particular copy of content is selected from the group consisting of a sale, a lease, and a license.

5 8. The method of claim 5 further comprising:  
receiving information from a third level distributor; and  
associating within the database, in response to the receiving  
information from the third level distributor, the tracking identifier with the  
primary distributor, the second level distributor and the third level  
10 distributor.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprising:  
crediting the primary distributor, the second level distributor,  
and the third level distributor, in response to a transaction selected from the  
15 group consisting of a sale, a lease, and a license wherein the transaction is  
derived from the particular content on the storage medium.

10. A content tracking system comprising:  
a distributor network including a primary level distributor and  
20 a second level distributor for distributing content embodied in a storage  
medium;

a server for receiving a tracking identifier that is incorporated  
with the content embodied in the storage medium and for receiving  
registration information from the primary level distributor and the second  
25 level distributor; and

a database for associating the content with the primary level  
distributor and the second level distributor and for associating transactions  
derived from the content on the storage medium with the primary level  
distributor and the second level distributor.

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11. The system of claim 10 wherein the primary level distributor and the second level distributor are distributors within a multi-level distributor network.

5                   12. The system of claim 10 further comprising:  
a storage medium and tracking identifier integrator for  
incorporating the tracking identifier with the content embodied in the storage  
medium.

10                   13. The system of claim 12 further comprising:  
a tracking identifier generator for generating the tracking  
identifier.

15                   14. The system of claim 10 wherein transactions derived from  
the content on the storage medium are selected from the group consisting of a  
sale, a lease, and a license.

20                   15. A system for tracking content comprising:  
means for receiving a tracking identifier that identifies a  
particular copy of media content;  
means for placing the tracking identifier in a database;  
means for receiving information from a primary distributor;  
means for associating within the database, in response to the  
receiving information from the primary distributor, the tracking identifier  
25 with the information from the primary distributor;  
means for receiving information from a second level distributor;  
and  
means for associating within the tracking identifier database, in  
response to the receiving information from the second level distributor, the  
30 tracking identifier with the second level distributor.

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16. The system of claim 16 comprising means for providing credit to the primary distributor and the second level distributor for transactions derived from the content after being distributed by the second level distributor.

17. The system of claim 16 wherein the transactions derived from the content are selected from the group consisting of a sale, a lease, and a license.

18. The system of claim 15 comprising:  
means for receiving information from a third level distributor;  
and  
means for associating within the tracking identifier database, in response to the receiving information from the third level distributor, the tracking identifier with the third level distributor, the second level distributor and the primary distributor.

19. The system of claim 18 comprising means for providing credit to the primary distributor, the second level distributor, and the third level distributor for transactions derived from the content after being distributed by the third level distributor.

20. The system of claim 19 wherein the transactions derived from the content are selected from the group consisting of a sale, a lease, and a license.